

## **Supplemental Instructions for National Register Nominations**

### **Michigan State Historic Preservation Office**

#### **The Goal:**

Nominations tell stories about our history and important historic places. These stories are inherently interesting. If a nomination is boring, there is something wrong. A nomination should **MAKE THE HISTORY COME ALIVE!**

A national register nomination should be long enough to adequately describe the historic resource and tell the story of its significance – but no longer than that. It should get to the point and stay focused on it.

In the case of individual nominations, lengthy descriptions should be avoided. Extended descriptions that discuss exteriors façade by façade and interior finishes room by room in detail quickly become tedious to read – and exhausting to the time-starved national register coordinator who has to review them! Descriptions of individual properties should not exceed two pages except in the most unusual of circumstances.

#### **Some Specifics:**

##### **Description Statement for Districts – Overview**

An overview that provides general descriptive information on the district is an essential part of the description statement that all too often gets short shrift. The overview should describe the following general characteristics of the district:

- General character of district: Is it primarily commercial, residential, industrial, etc., or does it contain a mix of types of development?
- Size and form: acreage, approximate maximum dimensions, general shape or form.
- Location: Where is it located in relation to the community in which it is located or, if in a rural setting, where is it located in relation to nearby communities or larger cities?
- Setting: What is the district's environment like – is the district flanked by older residential neighborhoods, factory district, highways, business district, farmland, woods, or what?
- Topography and physical features: What is the character of the topography throughout the district, and how do rivers, lakes, hills, or other physical features within or adjacent to the district affect its physical form?
- Street plan and public spaces: What is the street plan within the district, what is the character of the streets in general, are there boulevards or other special streetscapes, and are there squares or other public spaces? Do the street plan and public spaces result in vistas and visual focal points within the district?
- Street trees and plantings, pavements, and street furniture: Do shade trees or other plantings along the street form a significant part of the district's character? Are unusual

street or sidewalk paving, retaining walls, ornamental fencing, fountains, outdoor public sculpture, old horse blocks or hitching posts, street lighting, or other historic street furniture present?

- Building stock: What is the general character of the district's building stock in terms of property types, ages, architectural styles and building forms, and scale? What are the most important landmark buildings or other features from a visual standpoint?

### **Description Statement for Districts – Inventory**

The description statement for a district must include an inventory list of the buildings, structures, and objects within the district, whether or not they contribute to the district's historic character. Inventory entries should be arranged in the alphabetical order of the street names and then by street address. There should be only one list rather than separate contributing and non-contributing lists or lists separated into buildings, structures, and objects. A single list makes it simple to find the information for a specific address and determine whether or not a property is in the district.

For districts containing fewer than about fifty buildings, structures, and objects in all, the inventory entries should be brief paragraphs that provide descriptions of the buildings. The entry should provide the street address (or other locational information); proper name, if there is one; date of construction (use c. if specific date is not known) and any known dates of alteration; names of architect, contractor, and others involved in design and construction, along with place each called home, when they are known; property type (house, commercial building); number of stories; basic form, where appropriate (upright-and-wing, narrow-fronted and deep); roof type (gabled, hip); exterior cladding materials (clapboarded, sandstone-trimmed brick); architectural style (Italianate, Queen Anne); details (corbelled brick frieze, iron cornice); and significant alterations to exterior (modern metal grill covering façade).

If the date of construction is unknown, enter the date frame provided by available sources such as maps (such as "1895-1902 period: Sanborns" to indicate the building does not appear in the 1895 Sanborn fire insurance map but does show up in the 1902 one) or provide a single- or multi-year *circa* date frame for your best estimate of the construction date.

For districts of this size, the inventory entries are also the appropriate place in the nomination for historical background on the specific properties. Including both descriptive and historical information on each property in the inventory entry facilitates future use of the inventory for a broad range of purposes including local historic district study committee reports, tax credit and other project reviews, historical markers, and walking tour publications.

Example:

#### **KENT STREET, WEST SIDE**

**128. Smith & Dellenbaugh Block (1880); Ayers & Axtell, Lansing, contractors.**

Two-story seven-bay two-storefront red brick Italianate commercial building; symmetrical upper façade with window bays framed by projecting one brick deep piers running up to corbelled brick frieze except for the center bay, which is capped below the frieze by raised brickwork forming an arch; 2<sup>nd</sup>-story windows display chocolate brown Ionia sandstone caps; window caps and main bracketed iron cornice are of the same design as in 108-118; present pent-roof half-timbered Old English storefront for the bar/restaurant that occupies the entire first story dates from between 1973 and 1977.

Dr. Charles C. Dellenbaugh originally owned the building's south section and L. A. Smith the north. Willis M. Elder's drugstore was the initial occupant of the Dellenbaugh section of the building. From the late 1890s or very early 1900s until 1922 the Dellenbaugh's first floor housed Mr. and Mrs. Alphonso Sulpizio's fruit and candy and ice cream store. In 1922 the Sulpizios sold the fruit and confectionary business to Santino Guido. Under Guido's ownership, the store acquired the name "Candyland." Jean's Tavern occupied the space during the 1950s and expanded to occupy both storefronts by 1967. Steve and Cindy Fabiano's Fabiano's restaurant and bar replaced Jean's in 1979, and Amy's, the current restaurant/bar, opened in 1994.

This will likely be the maximum length you will need for buildings in your district; your entries may be substantially shorter in many cases.

For districts containing larger numbers of buildings, structures, and objects, the inventory entries should be brief one or two-line descriptions that include only basic information while excluding most information on details and alterations and also omitting historical information except proper name, date, and names of people involved in design and construction.

Examples:

**210. Higgins Block (1892); Judd Brothers, Mendon, contractors.**

2-story brick Italianate commercial building with Ionia sandstone trimmings and bracketed wood cornice.

or:

222. House (c. 1900). 2 ½-story clapboarded and shingled hip and cross-gable-roof Queen Anne; hip-roof turned-post front porch.

For very large districts containing more than 250 buildings, structures, and objects in all, a table format similar to what was used in the Rosedale Park Historic District (Detroit) nomination may be appropriate. Contact the national register coordinator to discuss an appropriate format for your project.

## **Significance Statement for Districts**

The significance statement should contain a narrative account of the district's historical development that sets forth and develops the historical themes/areas of significance applicable to

the district and clearly and specifically defines why the district is eligible for the national register. It should include a discussion of the district's early history and physical development that relates the history to that of the broader community. The discussion of events associated with the important historical themes/areas of significance may take the form of separate discussions of each theme or, especially in the case of smaller districts, form a single narrative that sets forth the events associated with all the relevant themes in a logically organized fashion. **Significance statements that consist primarily of separate historical accounts of individual properties will not be acceptable.**

### **Textnotes/Footnotes/Endnotes**

Notes should be provided to indicate the sources of information specific to the property being nominated, such as the circumstances surrounding its construction or establishment, dates of construction and alterations, architects, landscape architects, contractors, sculptors or other artisans, and materials suppliers involved in its construction or development, and people and events directly associated with it. In general the historical context information will not require noting the source except for information that is not commonly known or is contradictory to accepted understanding. Direct quotes and paraphrasing always need to have notes.

Notes in parentheses within the text, footnotes, and endnotes are all acceptable. Notes in parentheses within the text should only be used when all the notes are brief. If you have a lot to say in your notes, use one of the other formats.

### **Bibliography**

Bibliographical entries must follow some recognized format, such as those provided by the *Chicago Manual of Style* or *American Antiquity*. Websites are only acceptable as information sources to be listed in the bibliography when they make available primary source documentation such as federal land office records or when the source of the information is noted at the website. When websites are cited the bibliographical entry must reference the sources of the information or, for primary sources, the specific documents or document series used.

For districts where substantial source material for specific buildings, such as building permit data, newspaper articles or notices, and historic photographs, is available and keeping track of these specific references for possible future projects such as historic district study committee reports would have particular value, separate bibliographic references for the individual buildings should be provided that list these sources. (Standard sources of information that apply to all district properties – such as atlases, tax records, and city directories – should only be listed in the general bibliography.) This can be done through one of two ways:

- By adding a brief bibliographical note at the end of each inventory entry, in the case of the larger-format entries for districts containing about fifty or fewer buildings – for example, the bibliographical note at the end of the Smith & Dellenbaugh Block entry

above, in which brief references are made to sources more fully identified in the full bibliography:

*Obs.* [for *Observer* newspaper], 5/26 and 6/2/1880; 2/9/1881; and 3/9 and 4/13/1922; *History of Portland*, p. 22; Historical photographs, Amy's Restaurant; Historical Scrapbooks, "Streets – Paving – Etc."

- Or, it can also be done by having a separate section for any property for which specific source material beyond standard sources that apply to all district properties is available in the general bibliography. This format works better than the above one for the larger districts where the inventory entries are short one or two-liners.

### **For Further Information:**

Contact Robert O. Christensen, National Register Coordinator

Phone 517/335-2719

E-mail [christensenro@michigan.gov](mailto:christensenro@michigan.gov)

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